

November 27, 2002

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street
Washington D.C. 20554

Comment: Federal Don't Call List

Docket No. 02-278

Dear Sirs:

I recently retired and started to enjoy some leisure time around the house.

I found, however, was that I was getting forty to fifty calls per week from telemarketers. The vast majority of these calls hang up as soon as you pick up the phone. Initially, I had no idea why someone would do that. Of course, I have since learned that computers dial up to fifty numbers at a time, and only the one picked up by the telemarketer is connected. The rest become computerized hang ups. This harassment caused me to declare war on telemarketers.

First, I bought a caller ID device for \$20. Also, I had to sign for an \$8 per month caller ID fee from Verizon. I soon found that virtually all telemarketing calls are from 'unknown' sources and there is no way to track them. I also called Verizon and found that if my phone number is listed, Verizon will sell my number to telemarketers. I placed my name on the 'unlisted' list. For that, Verizon now charges me an additional \$2.95 per month. Thus, I have to pay the phone company not to sell my personal information.

I purchased a Telezapper for about \$50. This device sends out a disconnect tone every time the phone is picked up. If it is a computer generated telemarketer call, the tone causes the computer to hang up, and place you on the disconnected list. This is a wonderful device. My calls dropped 80% just because of Telezapper.

For those who dial direct, I created an extremely annoying answering machine message with screeching noises and a request to be removed from their contact list. I only did this for one week, on chance that a 'good' caller would be offended. It did stop an investment firm in Toledo, Ohio from calling several times per week, however.

I received my membership renewal to the AARP and found that AARP sells my personal contact information and distributes it without charge within the AARP at will. There are hundreds of articles in the AARP data base suggesting ways to fight telemarketers and fraud schemes, yet it is there own policy to participate in the telemarketing industry. I wrote to Mr. Bill Novelli, CEO of AARP pointing out their hypocritical position on this matter. He declined to respond.

I read about private marketing services that can be contacted to have your information removed from various phone and mail advertisers. Sometimes there is a fee. However, the worst part is that you must give them detailed personal information to, allegedly, get off the list! Where does the information go after that? It is easy to guess.

Besides my initial equipment purchases for about \$90, I have also obligated myself to about \$130 per year in fees to reduce exposure to telemarketers. This is a non-productive tax on anyone who chooses to resist telemarketing. The alternative is to accept incessant sales pitches and hang up calls all day, and part of the evening.

Clearly, this is an area in need attention by the FCC and Congress. As a consumer, I now know you cannot trust any company or agency to protect your privacy due of the large sums of money involved in trafficking personal information.

I strongly support any FCC rules or legislation which would provide us freedom from telephone harassment.

A Federally supported 'Don't Call' list would be a wonderful step forward.

Sincerely,

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